

Reflections on policy in adult education and community learning (ACE), with special reference to *Koia! Koia! Towards a Learning Society*¹

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a review of the report of the Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party released by government in September 2001. It discusses a number of themes arising out of this report. However, the report is not seen in isolation, and the paper locates it in a wider context. It identifies some of the difficulties faced by those involved in adult education and community learning (ACE) and by the Working Party itself in trying to move forward after a decade or more of neglect by government. It also identifies some influences of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission. Themes discussed include the need to adopt a broadly based statement of purpose, to develop stronger links with other 'sectors', to make a stronger claim for increased funding for ACE, to undertake further clarification of the contributions and requirements of different organisations and institutions, and to undertake further research. The paper concludes with key recommendations.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to debate about key policy issues currently facing the field of adult education and community learning (ACE). Its focus is on *Koia! Koia! Towards a Learning Society*, the report of the Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party released by government in September 2001. The paper identifies and discusses a number of themes arising out of this report, and attempts to locate it in a wider context. Reference is made to some of the difficulties faced by those involved in ACE and by the Working Party itself in trying to move forward after a decade of neglect by governments. It also refers to the work of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) and its influence on ACE policy development. The themes selected for discussion include the following: the need for a broadly based statement of vision and purpose for the field; the need to develop stronger links with other 'sectors'; the need to make a stronger claim for increased funding for ACE; the tensions that may arise out of

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the Working Party's desire to provide both support and surveillance for ACE practitioners and groups through the same or similar processes and mechanisms; the need for further work to clarify the contributions and requirements of different organisations and institutions if they are to work together effectively; and the need to increase the resources to enable researchers, practitioners and groups to undertake the variety of different kinds of research necessary for the strengthening of the field. The paper concludes by drawing together some key recommendations which arise out of the analysis

Background and context

1. Labour's promises of support for ACE

In the lead-up to the general election of 1999, the Labour Party issued a wide range of policy documents. In these documents (New Zealand Labour Party, 1999a; 1999b)] the Party emphasised that tertiary education should be seen not as a private good but rather as a central mechanism of public policy and hence as a public good. It argued that:

Public investment in tertiary education and research is one of the most powerful tools available to promote the kind of social and economic development New Zealand needs to face the challenges of the 21st Century' (New Zealand Labour Party, 1999a p.1).

It called therefore for a significant shift from the competitive market-driven tertiary education policies, which had dominated much of the previous government's thinking (see for example Ministry of Education, 1998), and instead advocated a more collaborative approach to the provision of education.

The Labour Party also issued a separate policy document entitled 'Pathways and Networks - Labour on Adult Education and Community Learning'. In this document it was noted that the 'Declaration on Adult Learning' published by the 5th International Conference on Adult Education which had met in Hamburg in July 1997 under the auspices of UNESCO, had called for 'a renewed vision of education in which learning becomes truly lifelong' (UNESCO, 1997). In the light of this, the document stated that the Party's policy was 'built on a recognition of the crucial role of education in relation to social investment, lifelong learning and nation building' (New Zealand Labour Party, 1999b p. 2).

The document claimed that in 1994 Labour had appointed the first ever Spokesperson for Adult education and community learning, and in 1996 it had gone to the election with the first comprehensive policy for adult education and community learning. Labour argued that:

within this sector, it is crucial to define, recognise and resource key learning pathways and networks, both inside and outside of the Qualifications Framework and to build effective partnerships between providers (New Zealand Labour Party, 1999b p. 2)

It then went on to detail a wide range of policy initiatives, which would demonstrate its commitment to provide formal recognition and increased support for this sector. In addition to this high level of support from Labour, the Alliance also made clear its commitment to adult education and community learning.

2. The appointment of TEAC and the ACE Working Party

At the general election in November 1999, a Labour/Alliance government was elected to office, and one of the early initiatives of this new Labour-led government was to establish a Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) to review all aspects of tertiary education. This Commission was appointed in April 2000 and published its first report three months later under the title 'Shaping a Shared Vision: Lifelong Learning for a Knowledge Society' (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2000). The breadth of the government's thinking about the nature and scope of tertiary education was signalled in the preamble to the Commission's terms of reference which state that:

Education provided by tertiary education providers, businesses, and community groups is vitally important to New Zealand in building a true knowledge society and achieving the economic benefits for such a society (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2000 p. 32).

Clearly adult education and community learning was seen by government as an important part of the wider field of tertiary education, and this view was strongly endorsed by the Commission in its first report which concluded that the:

...tertiary education system should be broadly defined to encompass all formal and non-formal learning outside the school system (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2000 p. 10).

Between July and December 2000 the Commission invited and considered submissions and in February 2001 published its second report under the title 'Shaping the System' (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2001c). This was followed in August 2001 by the third report entitled 'Shaping the Strategy' (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2001b).

In the meantime, in August/September 2000, the government appointed several working groups to examine specific aspects of tertiary education. Thus, a group of officials undertook a review of

industry training and an Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party was established. Over the ensuing months this Working Party invited and received a large number of submissions. In addition, discussions were held with a wide range of people and organisations.

3. Concerns and issues faced by the Working Party

The Working Party itself was faced with a very large number of issues and concerns affecting the field of adult education and community learning. Changes in tertiary education over the previous decade had, among other things, emphasised the following:

- a. heavy reliance by government on a market model of educational provision, and on competitive market mechanisms, rather than on processes and procedures of co-operative planning and on sharing limited resources;
- b. developing and expanding the qualifications framework and the unit standards and other elements upon which the framework rests, to the almost total exclusion of adult education and community learning programmes and groups which do not meet the requirements of the processes of curriculum standardisation under the framework (For a critique see Tobias, 1999);
- c. expanding the provision of formal tertiary education which included increasing state funding of private tertiary providers to the almost total exclusion of non-prescriptive non-formal adult education and community learning (For a critique see Tobias, 1997); and
- d. evaluating education and training programmes based primarily on private benefits or short-term outcomes, with special reference to short-term economic benefits to individuals and employers, rather than long-term benefits to society or the intrinsic value of certain forms and processes of education.

Overall, the effects of these changes were to further marginalise those involved in adult education, community learning, and especially those involved in learning and education in voluntary organisations and social movements. In July 2001, the report of the Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party was published, and two months later in September, it was released by government (Adult Education & Community Learning Working Party, 2001). This report addresses a wide range of issues and concerns faced by those involved in adult education and community learning (ACE) following a decade or more which had been characterised by (a) an almost complete lack of interest on the part of successive governments, (b) a lack of a policy framework within which ACE may be located and hence a lack of recognition and support by policy analysts and key people in the Ministry of Education, and (c) serious underfunding of many voluntary organisations and groups working in ACE.

4. Summary of the Report of Working Party

Faced with this difficult situation of large-scale neglect of the sector as a whole over an extended period of time, and in particular the lack of support for those forms of ACE located outside of educational institutions, the Working Party seems to have drawn on some of the thinking contained in a number of reports from the late-1980s and early 1990s (Hartley, 1989; Herbert, 1990; Lifelong Learning Task Force, 1985; and Shallcrass, 1987). It also seems that it may have been influenced by some of the thinking being done by TEAC as well as itself having some influence on this thinking. It devotes some attention to the task of legitimating the roles and potential roles of adult education and community learning. In doing this, it also draws on a number of documents published by UNESCO, the OECD and other international organisations, identifies a range of public and private benefits of ACE, and points to the large enrolments in a variety of ACE programmes. It then proceeds to highlight the roles of ACE in providing education for those with the greatest need, contributing to the strengthening of civil society, and identifying new national educational needs.

The report moves on to identify and discuss the following five sets of goals, which the Working Party sees as essential to a revitalised ACE sector, and it makes a number of recommendations in each section in order to work towards achieving the goals:

- a. Sector recognition (pp. 19-22) - The report argues that ACE must be ‘fully recognised as an educational sector and (as) part of an integrated Tiriti-based approach to education and social development’ (p. 18).
- b. More effective structures and processes to meet the educational needs of communities (pp.23-33) - The report argues that new forms of organisation and greater levels of accountability, both locally and nationally are needed if a revitalised and collaborative ACE sector is to meet the educational and social needs of the various communities.
- c. Maori development (pp. 34-37) - The report adopts a very wide-ranging approach to issues in Maori education and development and emphasises the central place which needs to be given to establishing an educational framework based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi which endorses tino rangatiratanga. It argues further that within this framework, ACE has an important contribution to make to Maori social development and must be funded accordingly.
- d. Funding (pp. 38-46) - The report argues that ACE should have ‘secure, flexible, equitable and transparent funding’ (p. 18) and that this is best achieved by establishing ‘a single funding pool’ (p. 39) by drawing together all public funds which currently derive from

various sources and which are currently distributed by ‘a confusing array of .. mechanisms’ (p. 38).

- e. Sector capacity (pp. 47-49) - Finally the report argues that the capacity or capability of the sector needs to be strengthened through research, professional development and more effective information for guidance and referral.

Themes and issues arising out of the report of the Working Party

The report makes a number of very important contributions to the advancement of adult education and community learning. In spite of this however, I think that it contains a number of limitations. These are discussed in the following sections.

1. Nature & purposes of ACE

The report includes a discussion of the purpose and nature of adult education and community learning in the section defining ACE (p. 10), as well as in the introduction (pp. 11-16). The Working Party commences by stating that:

Adult and Community Education (ACE) is a process whereby adults choose to engage in a range of educational activities within the community. The practice fosters individual and group learning which promotes empowerment, equity, active citizenship, critical and social awareness and sustainable development. In Aotearoa New Zealand, ACE is based upon the unique relationships reflected in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (p 10).

It then goes on to describe other features of ACE before stating that:

The nature of ACE makes it well suited to deliver effective programmes in: adult literacy; English language and social support programmes for speakers of other languages, personal development education, learning for whanau/hapu/iwi development; cultural retention, revitalisation of Maori language and culture; education to facilitate group and community development; (and) education for social and environmental justice (p 10).

In spite of the sense of idealism underlying this statement and the fuller discussion of many of these themes in the introductory section, I believe that a more robust and broadly based statement of vision and purpose for the field would further strengthen the claims of ACE for wider recognition. Such a statement needs to go beyond any narrow welfarist justification (however important this may be in the short-term). Moreover, it also needs to go beyond the kind of instrumentalist calculus of public and private benefits, which appears to underlie the discussion on page 13 (however important this too may be in the short-term). It should embrace the

diversity, breadth and richness of the field. I believe that any such statement must acknowledge that ACE programmes can and should make contributions to the kinds of goals indicated below. They should contribute to:

- a. the preservation and enhancement of cultural traditions;
- b. the promotion of critical awareness, sensitivity and appreciation of cultural, scientific, and artistic traditions, and the dissemination of information, insights and understandings of these traditions;
- c. the promotion and facilitation of creativity and of imaginative endeavours;
- d. the promotion of functional, cultural and critical literacies;
- e. the promotion, preservation and strengthening of traditions of democracy and active citizenship - the evidence suggests that some non-profit, voluntary organisations and groups, as well as some public tertiary education institutions, through their adult education programmes, are making a significant contribution to the preservation and strengthening of New Zealand's democratic traditions and to the promotion of active citizenship and democracy;
- f. the production of social capital and the promotion of civil society;
- g. the promotion of cultural, educational, economic and political mobilisation of marginalised, exploited or oppressed groups and communities;
- h. the promotion and support of community development;
- i. the provision of support and assistance to adults, who for whatever reasons, have been 'cooled out' of formal education when they were young, to enable them to achieve their educational, cultural, occupational and social goals;
- j. the promotion and facilitation of lifelong learning;
- k. the promotion of economic development and the maintenance and upgrading of knowledge and skills required in the labour market; and
- l. the promotion of organisational effectiveness by providing management, employees', trades union and workers' education, training and development programmes.

Without such a robust, broad and deep sense of purpose, which (a) allows for and indeed encourages debate over priorities and purposes, and (b) continues to recognise the legitimacy and importance of ACE as a field or sector, in spite of differences of philosophy among those involved, I believe that the field as a whole can be seriously weakened or undermined. Moreover, without this, it may be argued that both policy-makers and practitioners tend to either (a) narrow their sights and limit their thinking about the field and its possibilities, or (b) in the process of rejecting some of the purposes, reject or overlook the legitimacy or importance of the field as a

whole. This failure, I believe, has other serious consequences, in particular for funding, as well as for recommendations concerning structures and processes.

2. Links with other ‘sectors’

The report includes discussion of some of the links between ACE and other ‘sectors’ (see for example pp. 23-25). In my view, however this discussion is too limited, since people and organisations involved in ACE must be in a position to collaborate with other ‘sectors’ if they are to make the kind of impact, which the Working Party clearly believes they should make. Moreover it seems that the pre-occupation of the Working Party with funding issues (however important these may be) and with setting in place structures and processes for the allocation of these funds, leads it to discount or ignore altogether a range of programmes and activities which I would regard as forming an important part of the field of adult education and community learning, but which would not necessarily draw on the same pool of funds.

A very large number of adults are involved each year in learning and education in kohunga reo and other centres for early childhood education, kura kaupapa and primary schools, wharekura and secondary schools, polytechnics, universities, wananga and private educational establishments, and many other adult learners are involved in learning funded by Skill New Zealand under the Industry Training Organisation framework, professional continuing education, and organisational learning. In addition, a large number of marae, community centres, museums, art galleries and libraries, as well as employers, unions, government departments and ministries and regional and local authorities, all can and should play key roles in the field. And all should contribute to policy and practice in ACE as well as receiving support and advice from those with a primary focus on ACE without necessarily having any claim on the limited funding pool.

It is vital that a strong and vibrant ACE ‘sector’ or field should (a) be defined more broadly than provided for in this report so that any Board that may be established will be able to consider issues and make recommendations which go beyond the confines of ACE as described in this report, and (b) work closely with and seek to influence the wider field of tertiary education, industry training, health promotion and community development, as well as the fields of early childhood, primary and secondary education. It is very difficult to see how ACE can work effectively on its own without such links being made. Mechanisms also need to be developed to ensure that there is closer integration between work-based and community-based education.

3. Finance

The report notes that \$38.28m was allocated to ACE out of Vote: Education in 2000/1 (p. 39). This compares with \$37.06m in 1991/92 (Harré Hindmarsh & Davies, 1993 p.88). This comparison suggests strongly that the amount of funding in real terms fell significantly over this nine-year period - a trend which comes as no surprise in the light of the wider analysis contained in the report.

Despite this, and in spite of the increasing demands on the sector, the Working Party makes no claim for increased funding. There may have been sound short-term reasons for this. However, from a longer-term perspective it does seem extraordinary, especially since the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report clearly require substantial additional expenditure, not least in setting up and maintaining the Local ACE Networks and the national ACE Board. Instead the report (a) focuses on the redistribution of existing funds, (b) adopts a purely defensive position by emphasising that 'existing funding for the sector must be protected' (p.39), and (c) sees this as being achieved by the creation of a 'single funding pool' which will 'include allocations currently being used for ACE in secondary schools, Tertiary Education Institutions and other Tertiary Education Providers which are providing ACE; and might also include the adult education Correspondence School funding' (p.39).

4. Support vs. Surveillance

The structures and processes proposed by the Working Party seem to contain a number of tensions and contradictions. On the one hand, they are clearly intended to promote responsive, innovative, participatory, community-based approaches to ACE planning and decision-making. To achieve this, considerable emphasis is placed on collaboration and the provision of support, information and professional development opportunities for practitioners. At the local level, it is envisaged that all this will be encouraged and supported by Local ACE Networks. These will have responsibility for promoting ACE locally by facilitating co-ordination, assisting in the provision of professional development opportunities, developing collaborative models to ensure ACE funding is used to best effect in their areas, and facilitating local input into national goals, annual strategies, etc.. At the national level it is envisaged that advice, support, etc. to practitioners and ACE organisations and groups would be provided by an Adult and Community Education Board and its officers. In this respect it seems that the Board is expected to function in a way that is very similar to the old National Council of Adult Education (See Dakin, 1988). It will also be responsible for advising the Minister and the Tertiary Education Commission. These

then are some of the supportive and facilitative aspects of the recommended processes and structures

On the other hand it seems that these same structures (the ACE Board and Local ACE Networks), which are expected to promote and foster co-operation and innovation, are also expected to exercise a high degree of surveillance and control over the policies and practices of universities, polytechnics, schools and other chartered ACE Learning Centres. All these bodies will be required to take part in Local ACE Networks if they are to receive public funding for ACE. They will also be accountable to the Local Networks and provide reports through them to the national ACE Board. The implication is that Local ACE Networks and the ACE Board, which will be publicly funded, will both play key roles in decision-making on funding. They will also play a key role in developing national goals and strategies for the sector. These 'will be developed in negotiation between the ACE board and the government and will be reviewed every three years. Agreed goals will then be able to be included in new purchase agreements' (p, 31). On the basis of these national goals, Chartered ACE Learning Centres will be expected to develop annual strategies/profiles, which will influence funding allocations, etc..

5. Organisational differentiation

The report places considerable emphasis on setting in place mechanisms: (a) to secure the effective surveillance, control and accountability of Chartered Learning Centres; and (b) to ensure that all chartered organisations are treated identically for purposes of funding and monitoring. For this purpose, it distinguishes between Local Chartered ACE Learning Centres, National Chartered ACE Learning Centres, emerging Chartered Organisations and non-chartered organisation. There are however other ways of distinguishing between organisations, and it seems that too little attention is given to differentiating between universities, polytechnics, schools, voluntary organisations and community groups, and the very different contributions which can and should be made by them. Difference of form, function and contribution between different kinds of organisations necessarily leads to other differences, which can and should be taken into account in developing ACE policy.

Research which I have undertaken in Christchurch over many years has in fact documented the varied nature of the contributions of different organisations and institutions. For example the contributions of universities, polytechnics, schools, voluntary organisations and community groups to adult education for active citizenship are very different and each merits understanding in its own right (Tobias, 2000a).

Furthermore, partly because of the neglect of the field in recent years, and the consequent lack of recent policy analysis and limited statistical and other research data, as well as the limited resources available to the Working Party, no in-depth description or analysis of the contributions of various kinds of organisations is provided. The descriptions of the various kinds of organisations - institutional and 'community-initiated' - provided in the report are thus very brief and generalised.

For example, the discussion of universities and their contributions to adult education and community learning is brief and selective (p. 24). The description of the history of their contributions is limited, and the Working Party does not even begin to examine any visions of possible future developments in universities' contributions to the field (See for example Duke & Tobias, 2001; Pearman & Tobias, 2002). No recognition is given to the positive achievements at some universities in recent years, despite the fact that the community education programmes offered at some universities today are far more comprehensive than at any time in the past. Certainly in recent years the University of Canterbury through its Centre for Continuing Education has contributed more systematically and substantially than at any time in the past to the kinds of objectives outlined on page 13 of the report or in the above paragraphs.

In addition, the Working Party does not seem to be aware that some universities over the years have subsidised their community education programmes quite heavily out of other revenues. If these universities were required to allocate 20% of their public funding to support non-chartered groups as recommended by the Working Party (p. 42), it is likely that they would be driven out of the publicly funded ACE sector altogether. This would be especially likely to happen if universities were required to set in place the kinds of additional accountability measures both locally and nationally as well as satisfying the other requirements as stated on page 42 of the report. Many universities would be likely to consider that the surveillance and control mechanisms proposed by the Working Party would contradict their understandings of principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and would consequently withdraw from the field. Should this happen there would be a substantial reduction in many localities in those programmes which universities are uniquely well suited to provide, and inevitably a reduction in the resources allocated to university adult and community education.

6. Research

The report draws attention to the fact that the data currently available to assist in policy development is limited and fragmented. Moreover such information as is collected by the Ministry of Education is not always relevant, useful or readily accessible. The Working Party also highlights the general paucity of research in the field, its variable quality, and its 'fugitive' character (p. 47). In view of this, it calls for the piloting and development of new systems of data collection, analysis and interpretation to inform the processes of planning and policy development and recommends that 'the ACE Board bring together research on the sector currently available; and identify and fund research priorities' (p. 49).

The 'fugitive' character of much research in the field of adult education and community learning is well illustrated by the fact that the Working Party itself seems to have been unaware of some of the research which was directly relevant to issues addressed by it (See my submission to TEAC Tobias, 2000b and other more recent papers). For example, a recent paper (Tobias, 2001) undertakes a review of trends and patterns of participation in ACE over the twenty-year period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s. It draws on four national sample surveys and raises questions concerning some aspects of the findings of previous research as summarised in the report (p. 28). Moreover, the report pays considerable attention to the low levels of participation by Maori in ACE (p. 34). The findings of this research however question this. Although it is undoubtedly true that rates of participation by Maori people in most forms of 'mainstream' education have been low, the evidence from some of the national surveys suggests that this has not necessarily been the case in the field of adult education and community learning. In spite of a lack of state funding, high levels of unemployment and relatively large numbers of early school-leavers, Maori rates of participation in ACE in the mid-1980s seem to have been higher than those of non-Maori. Moreover, even in the mid-1990s the participation rates of Maori remained relatively high. These findings lend support to the view that very much greater funding of Maori adult education and community learning programmes is more than justified and must be provided if equity is to be achieved in 'mainstream' formal education. They also provide support for the recommendation that ACE structures and policies should be based on the Treaty of Waitangi.

In addition, the findings serve to reinforce the recommendations of the Working Party on research - recommendations which I wholeheartedly endorse. It may be jumping the gun somewhat, but I would like to add to these recommendations by signalling the need for attention to be given to a wider variety of different kinds of research than are referred to in the report. These include the following: monitoring patterns of access, participation and short- and long-term outcomes;

maintaining a data base of organisations, institutions and groups (potential/actual) involved in ACE and lifelong learning; systematically documenting and supporting innovation; promoting and encouraging the sharing and dissemination of ‘good practice’; informing policy-development and evaluation; extending and deepening critical understanding of the field of adult education and community learning; and promoting reflection/action and the development of Participatory Action research (PAR) for social change and social justice.

Conclusion

In this paper I have commented extensively and at times somewhat critically on selected aspects of the report of the Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party. However, I have also tried to place the report within a wider context. The process of policy development is a continuing one, and it would be a mistake to isolate the report from the wider policy development process and context. I believe that the report is an important one. However, it constitutes but a moment in the ongoing policy discourse. For this reason I have tried to draw some links with other aspects of the process as well as drawing attention to some of the difficulties which were faced by the Working Party. Many of these difficulties and concerns, as I have noted, arose as a consequence of many years of neglect of the field and in particular the failure of governments in the 1990s to recognise and fund the huge contribution and potential contribution of voluntary organisations, community groups and social movements. I also believe, however, that many of the difficulties arose out of theoretical positions adopted by some of the working parties and groups of the late-1980s. I think that much of this work was very much more narrowly focused than that of the 1970s.

Since the publication of the report, the process of policy development and implementation has moved on. Following its publication, a Ministerial Reference Group rather than an Interim ACE Board was set up by the Associate Minister of Education, and this Reference Group has been following up on and implementing a number of the report’s recommendations. Steps taken have included the appointment of a Chief Advisor for Adult and Community Education and a Communications Officer in the Ministry of Education, the allocation of funds to support a national ACEA Conference in Auckland in May and the Adult Learners’ Week in August 2001, further work on piloting Local ACE Networks in selected areas, and extensive consultations with a variety of groups and organisations. In addition, in November 2001, the TEAC published its final report, and this report drew on the report of the Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party to formulate its proposals for the funding of ACE. TEAC therefore recommended that ACE should be funded by the Tertiary Education Commission through a ‘separate ring-

fenced fund’ (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2001a p.35). However, at least partly because of delays associated with the wider changes taking place in the whole tertiary education system, a number of issues raised in the report have not yet been addressed and a number of its recommendations have not yet been implemented.

Finally, by way of conclusion, I wish to highlight some recommendations that arise out of the analysis presented in this paper.

Firstly, the analysis suggests that a very broad understanding of the nature and purposes of ACE should be adopted and that close links need to be established with other educational sectors as well as other spheres of activity which involve adult or community learning and education.

Secondly, it points to the complexity of the ACE field or ‘sector’ and the diversity of organisations involved in adult education and community learning, and it suggests that there are dangers in any proposal based on the notion that all forms of ACE should be funded out of a ‘single funding pool’.

Thirdly, it argues that universities and other institutions should be eligible to receive government funding through TEC for their ACE contributions as well as for their other contributions on the basis of their charters and profiles negotiated with TEC, provided that these charters and profiles meet the criteria set out by TEC on the advice of the ACE board.

Fourthly, it highlights the need, as recommended by the Working Party, for a strong and broadly-based ACE board, albeit one that is advisory to TEC. It suggests that the board should be responsible for advising both the Commission and the Minister of Education on all policy issues affecting lifelong, adult and community education. It suggests these should include advising on national goals and strategies, the development of relevant ACE criteria for institutional and organisational charters and profiles and developing the criteria for the allocation of all state funding for adult education and community learning, as well as issues of work-based learning. The board should also be responsible for advising the Minister on other spheres of activity which involve processes of adult and community learning and education. The Board should, however, not be the funder of adult education and community learning.

Fifthly, in addition to these advisory functions, it suggests that the board should also be responsible for establishing and maintaining local and national networks, facilitating and promoting research and professional development opportunities, and providing advice and support to individuals, organisations groups and institutions involved in ACE.

Sixthly, the analysis suggests that there is a very good case for substantial increases in funding for community-initiated adult education and community learning organised by voluntary organisations and community groups. It points to the fact that the level of state funding for ACE

fell substantially during the 1990s and that the voluntary and community sector had been particularly seriously affected by the withdrawal of state funding and the lack of policy development and recognition.

Finally, the analysis has highlighted the need for further research in a field which is currently seriously under-resourced for research.

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